

Abstract 656

TITLE: HIV/STD Risk Behaviors Among Adolescents Accessing HIV Prevention Counseling
And Testing in a School-Based Clinic

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ISSUE: Increasing rates of HIV infection and other STD's among adolescents and young adults warrant HIV/STD prevention projects targeting this population. Understanding adolescent's participation in HIV risks behaviors and those factors, which may predict their participation in risk reduction behavior is crucial to the development of appropriate and effective prevention programs.

METHODS: Analyzed surveys completed by adolescents at risk for HIV/STD's accessing HIV prevention counseling and testing in an urban high school-based health clinic in the Midwest. Survey measures include HIV knowledge, attitudes toward peer pressure, abstinence and condom use, and self-perception of HIV risk, confidence, and HIV/STD risk behavior in the previous 6 months.

RESULTS: Data were analyzed on 78 adolescents. Students participating in the baseline data collection were 67% African-American, 76% female and their average age was 15.82 years old. On average, participants had a fairly high level of HIV knowledge, had positive attitudes toward HIV protective behaviors, perceived themselves at moderate risk for acquiring HIV, were confident in their ability to resist peer pressure and were participating in a moderate level of HIV risk behaviors. Examining the risk variables further revealed 30% reported a history of an STD, 68% reported having used drugs or alcohol in the past, 33% of the students reported more than 4 sexual partners in their lifetime, 60% reported using a condom during their last sexual encounter, and 22% reported having had sex while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Significant Pearson correlations were revealed between knowledge and attitudes ($r=.41$, $p<.01$), knowledge and confidence ($r=.27$, $p<.05$), attitudes and confidence ($r=.40$, $p<.01$), age and self-perception of risk ($r=.25$, $p<.05$) and confidence and behavior ($r=.21$, $p<.10$). The only significant differences found between those adolescents that had used a condom during their last sexual encounter and those who did not were that those that used reported using condoms more consistently, and reported more lifetime sexual partners.

CONCLUSIONS: Self-confidence may play a role in an adolescent's ability to participate in HIV/STD risk reduction behavior. This study reveals that factors, which influence participation in HIV/STD risk reduction behaviors by adolescents, are complex and multifaceted. Further research is needed to determine what may influence youth to reduce their risk for acquiring HIV or other STD's.

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